



## Unknown Territory by Charlie Belle

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**Summary:** Piper Canon moves to Hawkin's after the death of her parents to live with her Uncle. But she never thought that moving to Hawkin's would include a kid with superpowers and inter dimensional beings. And she thought joining a new high school was gonna be her biggest worry.

# 1. The Move

## Chapter One

### The Move

A heavy sigh passed through through Piper's chapped lips, her eyes scanning as they drove down the freeway. Her foot tapped restlessly drowning out the soft music that was coming through the radio.

"How much longer."

Hopper looked over towards the teen sitting beside him, her head still turned towards the window so he wasn't able to read her expression. "Not much, no more than an hour."

To say the tension in the air was thick would be an understatement. Hopper's grip tightened more on the steering wheel as Piper's foot tapping seemed to grow louder and louder. She looked and turned towards him and nodded her head. Hopper knew it wasn't gonna be easy, especially with a teenager moving into his house. But he also knew it was going to be even more difficult seeing it was his niece that was moving in, and the reason for her move was the death of his sister.

"Look I know it's going to take some adjusting, but I also want you to know that you can come to me and talk to me." He spoke softly

Piper sniffled softly and nods her head slowly. "I know, Uncle Jim. I just..."

She never finished her sentence and just let it hang off, turning her head back towards the window to watch the Indiana landscape pass by. Piper sighed heavily and rested into the passenger seat more, closing her eyes as she tried to will her body to relax.

*"Piper!" Kathy shouted up the stairs towards her daughter, her eyes trained on the closed bedroom door, waiting for her daughter's head to pop out. She waited for a moment and didn't hear any movement. "Piper Ann Canton!"*

*Piper groaned loudly and threw her blanket over her head trying to block out her mother's voice. Her hopes of her mother just leaving her alone was quickly diminished as she heard her mothers loud footstep coming up the stairs. Her bedroom door crashed open against her dresser, knocking a few of her things off the top, causing the teen to pop up quickly.*

*"Mom!" She shouted with a edge of anger in her voice as she saw her scattered things across her floor. "What the hell?"*

*"Language!" Kathy glared down towards her sixteen year old daughter. "Did you forget what today is?"*

*Piper stared towards her mother, her features quickly changing from angry to confused.*

*"It's your father's company party." Kathy sighed and ran her hand through her brown, curled hair. "Now we're leaving to go and pick up his suit. We'll be home in an hour and I want you to be ready to go when we come back."*

*Piper rolled her eyes and laid back down across her bed, rolling over to have her back face towards her bedroom door. "Yeah, whatever mom."*

*Kathy stood up straight and shook her head before closing the door and heading back down the stairs. Her husband, James, stood at the end of the steps and chuckled softly before shaking his head.*

*Hours had passed and Piper looked towards the clock for the tenth time in four minutes, but it seemed that the time was ticking by slower and slower with each passing second. She rolled her eyes as she moved to take a seat on the couch, grabbing the remote to turn on the television. Piper just thought her parents forgot to pick her up after heading back from the store. This wouldn't be the first time. But something uneasy began to settle into her stomach. That something was wrong.*

*Piper gasped slightly and jolted up from the position she was laying in, looking around her with a sense of panic, before relaxing as she looked towards her Uncle.*

*"Hey, hey." He reached over and rubbed her shoulder softly "Everything ok?"*

Piper looked through the windshield to see they had arrived back at her Uncle's home – well cabin. She nodded her head as her breathing started to even out, but her heart beating rapidly against her chest. She reached for the door handle and quickly exit the car, the chill Hawkin's air filling her lungs. Her green eyes looking over the woods surrounding Hopper's home.

"This is much different from Detroit." She whispered softly, turning around to face her Uncle and give him a weak smile.

They gathered her things from the back of his truck, slowly making their way inside, Piper following her uncle into her brand new bedroom.

"I know it's not much, and we can head into town to get you furniture and everything else that you might need." Hopper spoke before pushing the door open to the room.

It was a basic plain room with a double bed, side tables and a dresser. Nothing on the walls except for a empty shelf. She walked around the room, before turning back towards her Uncle.

"Thank you," She spoke before setting her bag down at the end of her bed. "I'd like that...heading into town."

He nodded his head and placed her other bag beside her dresser. "Now I have to head into the station for a few hours, but I'll be back in time for dinner and I'll bring some food from Benny's diner with me." He hesitated "If you need to reach me, I'll leave the number for the station on the counter. Are you going to be ok?"

Piper nodded her head. "Yeah. I'll be fine. I'll just unpack."

Hopper looked towards the girl still finding it hard to get a read from her. Her expression blank. He nodded his head one before turning and walking back down the hallway. Piper could hear him hesitate in the kitchen before the sound of the door closing gave her the signal that he was gone. She stood up and walked towards the window, watching as his police truck sped down the road towards town.

The silence sounded deafening to her ears. Never did Piper think

she'd miss the sound of the city. She moved back to the bed and brought her knee's tightly to her chest, her head falling into her lap as she gently started to cry. Her soft cries quickly turning to hard sobs.

Her body tired out from her cries, waking up hours later to the cabin being encased in darkness, and soft snow falling outside the window. She sat up slowly and reached to turn on the side lamp. She yawned and rubbed her eyes gently, before looking around her new bedroom.

"Guess it's time to make this feel more like home" She spoke mostly to herself, before standing from the bed and opening the bag that sat at the end of her bed.

Hours passed by and Piper had nearly everything unpacked from her bags, a little life placed into the once barren room. Photos of her friends back home, and the few photos of her parents that she had left. It was nearing midnight when she was finally done, and it wasn't until her stomach growled, that she remembered Hopper's promise of dinner. She sighed heavily and left the room, turning on the main light. She grabbed the phone off the wall and the piece of paper off the counter before dialing the number for the station. It rang a few times before a older woman picked up.

"Hawkin's Police, this is Patti."

"H-hi...This is Piper Canton. I'm Jim Hopper's niece, he gave me this number to call..." Piper hesitated for a moment not really knowing what else to really say.

"Oh yes, he mentioned just in case you did call, sweetie. He left about" There was a pause "Five hours ago. You want me to call his radio? Let him know you called?"

"Yes please. Thank you."

Piper hung up quickly and moved the phone number onto the fridge under a magnet just in case she would need that number again. She walked around the cabin trying to find anything to eat but sadly all she found was a box of crackers and a jar of peanut butter. *Better than nothing at all*, she thought to herself. She grabbed a spoon from the

silverware drawer, before moving to the couch and turning on the tv.

She jumped slightly to the sound of the door opening, quickly moving to look over the back of the couch and sighing with relief when she recognized Hopper.

"I know. I'm late." He sighed and set two bags of take out onto the side table beside the door. "But I ran into a little...issue."

"Issue?" She asked softly and sat up more, noticing movement behind her Uncle. "Whose with you?"

Hopper sighed heavily, and turned to the side slightly, a small girl standing behind him, cowering back as she noticed Piper sitting on the couch.

"T-This is El. She's going to be staying with us for a while." Hopper spoke, gently guiding El into the house. Piper stood gently from the couch, setting down her spoon and peanut butter.

## **Ten Months Later**

Piper moved around the kitchen quickly as she tried to cook breakfast and make coffee for three people without burning the cabin down to the ground. The tv played softly from the living room, looking over her shoulder to see El looking intently towards the screen. Over the last ten months that tv had been her only real connection to the outside world – outside of Hopper and Piper. It took a while for the girl to take a warming to Piper. And it took even longer for Piper to full grasp the story behind El and how she and Hopper had come to know each other. But she was quickly convinced when El showed her her abilities.

"El, breakfast is ready!" She called out towards the living room as she poured coffee into a thermos, turning off all the burners before walking towards the door at the end of the hallway and knocking on it loudly. "Uncle Jim! Breakfast!"

She heard a grunt from behind the door, causing her to roll her eyes and head back down the hallway to sit down the table across from El. The girl looked up towards Piper, lightly picking at her eggs.

"They taste bad?" She looked towards El "Did I burn them?"

El shook her head "N-No. Eggs fine."

Piper looked towards her and could tell that was she was trying to tell her something just not finding the proper words. "Is it cause I leave for school today?" El nodded her head. "I'll only be gone for a few hours each day, and I'll come back so we can still watch movies and stuff."

"Promise?" El spoke, sitting up a little straighter in her seat.

"Promise" Piper spoke before starting to eat.

Hopper walked out of his bedroom door towards the table where the two girls sat, fixing his belt as he walked before grabbing his thermos and taking a drink.

"Perfect, Piper. Thank you." He walked towards the counter and grabbing his plate before leaning against the counter and started to nearly shovel the eggs into his mouth. "Now remember I'm working late tonight girls. Piper you come right home after school to be here with El."

Piper quickly cleared her plate as she looked towards the clock, knowing that Johnathan would be waiting for her at the end of the block to pick her up. She moved to kiss El gently on the forehead and ruffle her grown out hair, before grabbing her backpack.

"I'll be home. 3:15"

The moment she was in Jonathan Byers car, she reached into her bag to pull out the pack of cigarette's she hid from Hopper. The anxiety of starting at the a new school was slowly creeping through out her entire body. She lit on quickly before bringing it to her lips and taking a long drag. She cranked down the window quickly before blowing the smoke out the window.

"I don't know why you're so nervous." Jonathan chuckled and shook his head. "It's not like you're going in knowing no one. You have me, and sorta Nancy."



"And I'm also starting during senior year." She looked towards him, smoke billowing past her lips as she spoke.

Jonathan parked the car towards the back of the parking lot, groups of students heading down the small hill from the parking lot towards the middle and high school. Piper finished off her cigarette before opening the door and dropping the butt towards her feet outside the car. She looked around to see the stereo typical group of students talking and walking together.

Already her green eyes landed on the group of girls standing by the front of the lot looking towards her as they whispered and laughed together. *Mean girls*, she thought. Piper didn't look like them, she didn't have brand new clothes and her face painted with thick layers of makeup. And she knew that because she didn't look like them – Piper was already not accepted.

"Great" She spoke before grabbing her backpack "Guess things don't change no matter where you live, huh?"

Jonathan shook his head and shrugged before they began to make their way across the parking lot. Piper was grabbing her thick brown curls and pulling them back into a ponytail as the rev of a engine sounded from the gate. She stopped quickly in her steps to see a blue Camero speed past both her and Jonathan before parking at the far side.

"Fucking asshole," She shouted towards the car, watching as a girl with red hair quickly hop out and make her way to the middle school.

Piper finished tying up her unruly hair and looked back over to watch a someone stepped out of the car. It was like the entire parking lot stopped to watch who was in the shiny new Camero. His blonde hair seem to shiny like a halo around his head as he looked around the parking lot. His broad shoulders stretching his jean jacket across his shoulders, and his chest exposed slightly as he took one final puff from his cigarette. He and Piper seemed to nearly be in a staring contest as he looked across the parking lot. His blue eyes never leaving hers as he dropped the cig to the floor and smashed it with his boot. Jonathan shouted out her name, catching her attention from

the entrance. She looked back towards the blonde stranger before walking towards the doors. As she passed the group of girls from before she couldn't help but hear the whisper and gasp over the new guy.

## **2. Happy Birthday**

### **Chapter Two**

#### **Happy Birthday**

Piper quickly threw her things into her locker, her stomach growling loudly, as if it knew that it was lunch time. So far her first day wasn't going too terribly. There were the usual stares and whispers as she walked through the hall. But nothing that was extreme. She was almost thankful to the other new kid, because he seemed to be a bigger distraction to everyone. Especially the girls.

By the end of second period she was able to learn that his name was Billy Hargrove. He had just moved to Hawkins from California and the red head that jumped out of his car was his step-sister. Every girl wanted to be with Billy, as every guy wanted to be Billy. But Piper rolled her eyes from everyone's reaction. Hawkins was a small town, and not much went on, so when stuff happened it was a big deal. She got that. Understood it even, but didn't get why everyone fawned over someone that was exactly like the rest of them.

Piper pushed through the crowd of students and walked towards the back doors to head towards Jonathan's car. Before they split off for their first period he had told her to meet her back at the car for lunch. She walked across the parking lot and already saw him sitting atop of his hood with his lunch across his lap.

"Byers" She sighed heavily as she popped herself onto the car and unpacking her lunch sack.

"Canon," He chuckled softly "How's school treating you so far?"

"Fine." She shrugged and took a bite out of her sandwich. "Nothing really to complain about, except for people staring and whispering as I walk by them."

Jonathan chuckled "Yeah. I'm not gonna lie, people have been talking. Mostly people wanna know if you're a newly found love child of Hopper's."

Piper quickly spit out of food and began to cough uncontrollably. Jonathan moved closer to her across the hood and patted her back to help her catch her breath. She took a deep breath before straightening and turning to her friends, her green eyes slightly shinning from her unshed tears.

"You're kidding me?" She asked and he shook his head. "Jesus Christ."

"It's a small town, they don't wanna hear the truth they wanna make up their own story for entertainment."

Piper reached up and wiped away her eyes quickly before taking a drink from her water bottle. After closing up the cap, her hand reached into her bag and pulled out a cigarette and lit it quickly. The thought of teachers catching her wasn't really on her mind currently.

"You hear about the party happening tomorrow night?" Jonathan asked. Piper shook her head and blew out smoke from between her lips. "Well, Nancy told me about it. It's a Halloween party at someone's house while her parents are out of town."

"Halloween is my birthday." She reminded him.

"Y-Yeah. I know." He spoke shyly. "Thought maybe it would be better than sitting at Hopper's cabin alone."

Piper bit down on her lower lip and quickly looked away from him as she took another drag from her cigarette. She knew that El was a secret to everyone but herself and Hopper. He nearly put the fear of God into her soul when he let her know that no one, under any circumstance, is to know about El. And she began to love and care for Eleven deeply as she spent the last ten months with her. Seeing her as her little sister that she needed to protect. So that meant she wasn't able to let Jonathan know she planned to just sit in Hopper's cabin but with Eleven. The two of them eating candy till their stomach's ached.

"Come on. It might be fun." Jonathan spoke after a long moment of silence. He looked down at his friend and saw that her foot began to tap. It was a small habit that he noticed she did when she was nervous or anxious.

"Can I think about it?" Piper looked back up towards him. Jonathan nodded as the bell rang signaling the beginning fourth period.

Piper quickly moved to flick her cigarette off to the side once it was done and cleaned up Jonathan's hood before they started towards the school again. The two of them split up in the lobby and Piper moved to grab her books from her locker. When she walked into fourth period English she noticed that the classroom was nearly filled except for one seat. And it happened to be beside none other than the new guy, Billy Hargrove. He was leaned over the back of his desk chair talking to Tommy. Tommy looked to be hanging off of every word that Billy said.

She tried to ignore the way her stomach flipped as she walked towards the only option she had for a desk. Slowly she tried to sink into the chair, hoping that no one around her would notice her presence. The last thing she needed was the cackling three from this morning taking notice of her again.

The teacher called attention to the class not long after she'd taken her seat. Piper's hand seemed to clench tighter to her pencil as she could see Billy's eyes trained on the side of her face. But she kept her's forehead and on the teacher. She wasn't gonna be like every other girl today and blush and fall at his feet. *But why the hell is my heart rate quickening?*

The moment school was done Piper made sure to gather her things quickly so that Jonathan was able to drop her off so she'd get home to El. She knew how much the girl hated being alone in the cabin all day with nothing to distract her but the television. When she walked out to the parking lot for the third time that day, it was like a replay of this morning. As she walked towards the car she could see Jonathan leaning against the driver's side talking to Nancy.

"You ready Byers?" She asked, leaning against the car beside him and smiling towards Nancy. "Hey Nanc."

"Hey." She smiled widely towards Piper "How was your first day?" Piper shrugged as her answer and smiled. Nancy laughed and shook her head. "You get a look at the new guy? Billy? That's all anyone is talking about today."

"Yeah. He's in my fourth period." Piper moved a curl from her eyes and jumped as she heard the rev of the now infamous Camero across the parking lot, the sound of metal blaring through the speakers. "But I didn't talk to him."

"Well, I was talking to Jonathan about the Halloween party tomorrow night. You should totally come. Get to know people." She shrugged her shoulders.

"Yeah. Maybe"

Piper seemed to check herself out of the conversation as she watched Billy quickly drive out of the lot. She tried so hard all day to ignore to pit in her feeling that formed any time she knew he was close. It was like the same feeling she got the night her parent's died.

As Piper walked into the cabin she smiled as she saw El in exactly the spot that she thought that she would be. Curled up on the couch with her knee's to her chest and intently watching the show on the screen.

"Hey, kiddo." She threw her bag down onto the floor beside her bedroom door before taking a seat on the couch beside El. "Anything good on the tv?"

El sat up and shook her head. "Same stuff."

Piper wrapped her arm around El's shoulder and pulled her closer into her side. "Find something good for us to watch before Hop get's home and hogs the tv for his boring sports."

El laughed softly, before turning back to the tv, her eyes focused on the spin dial of the tv, nodding her head to the left – her powers working to turn the channel to a movie.

## **The Next Day After School**

Piper didn't know if she had a slight pep in her step because it was her seventeenth birthday, or the fact that she had planned to get out of the house with Jonathan tonight. After breakfast this morning, cooked by Hopper with birthday pancakes, she over heard him telling El they were going to spend the night in together – giving her good conscious to try and have a good night tonight. She'd already come

up with a lie to Hopper this morning saying she was going to be having a sleepover with Nancy for her birthday, so she had an excuse to not come home. Just in case she had one too many drinks. It had been one hell of a year for her and all she wanted was to relax and not care about anything.

"Alright, Byers, you ready?" She smiled towards him.

He laughed as he watched as she seemed to nearly be bouncing in front of him. "For someone that didn't seem too excited yesterday, you are beaming with it right now."

"It's my birthday. Aren't I allowed to be happy?"

"Of course." Jonathan rolled his eyes and opened his car door before grabbing a poorly wrapped package out of the glove compartment. "Before I forget...I got you something"

Piper blushed lightly and reached forward for the gift. "Jonathan...y-you didn't have to"

"Are you kidding me? Of course I did. It's your birthday."

She looked towards him one more time before ripping open the wrapping and gasped loudly as she stared down at what was in front of her. It was a brand new camera.

"I-I can't accept this. Are you crazy?" Her wide green eyes shot back and forth between the camera in her hands and the boy standing in front of her. "This is crazy expensive."

He shook his head "Stop it. When you told me you forgot yours in Detroit, I knew that I had to get you another one. You can start taking pictures again."

Piper moved quickly to hug her friend tightly "Thank you Jonathan, really. This is amazing."

"You're welcome. Happy Birthday, Piper."

She stood in front of the mirror and pulled the last strand back and pinned it into her hair, before smiling, finally satisfied with her look.

Piper made sure to slip her new camera into her bag before opening the door of the Byers bathroom and stepping out. Joyce smiled widely when she saw Piper stepped out and smiled widely.

"Oh, my god you look amazing." She clasped her hands tightly over her mouth to try and hide her smile. "You look exactly like her."

Piper gave a little twirl before smoothing down the skirt of her tutu skirt that was over her neon pink leggings. With short notice her costume wasn't really that creative, but she didn't think it was pretty amazing. Madonna, like any other teen girls idea at the moment. When she turned the corner she smiled when she saw Will in his Ghost-busters costume.

"You look cool kid." She moved her hand up from him to high-five, which he did with a huge smile. Jonathan walked from out of his room, in the exact same clothes he wore to school. "Halloween and no costume?"

"Are you shocked?" Will laughed

"Guess I shouldn't be." She shrugged before grabbing Jonathan's hand and pulling him out of the house. Both of them shouting over their shoulders a quick goodbye to Joyce and Will before they headed out to his car.

When Jonathan pulled up in front of Tina Coleman's house it was already fully packed with teenagers and loud music was vibrating from the walls quickly. Piper could hear people shouting from the backyard over the music and beer cans were already littering the front lawn. As the two walked up towards the house, a guy rushed from the front of the house and began to vomit all over the front lawn. *Typical*, Piper thought. Piper followed behind Jonathan and pushed against bodies, almost immediately being separated from each other. As she walked towards the back of the house she spotted Nancy racing up the stairs with Steve following behind her. From the stumbling and the red all over the front of her sweater – Piper could tell that the girl was drunk.

She walked through the party quickly to find a spot where she wouldn't be pressed between bodies of sweaty teenagers. It felt like



fresh air as she pushed through the crowd and found space within in the kitchen. Her hand reached forward and grabbing a red cup from the stack in front of her and dipped it into the frothy red drink in the punch bowl. As Piper took a sip she nearly gagged from how strong the drink was, but stomached it as she took another sip.

"Fuck," She cursed as she walked towards the backyard where majority of the party was. Her eyes scanned over the crowd quickly to try and spot Jonathan or anyone else that she would possibly know. But with no luck, she grabbed her pack from her bag and walked to a secluded spot and lit a cig quickly. *Jonathan will come and find me eventually.* But Jonathan wasn't the one to find her. Not even Nancy or Steve.

"Hey," A deep slurring voice sounded from beside her. When she looked up her eyes quickly met with the strangers. As she took a long drag from the cig she could make out his form slightly from the burning embers. "Can I bum one of ya?"

Billy Fucking Hargrove.

### 3. Party On

#### Chapter Three

##### Party On

Piper stared at the boy in front of her, the cigarette placed between her lips as he slightly stumbled closer to her. She took another drag before blowing the smoke off to the side.

"You hear me doll?" Billy spoke with a slightly smirk on his face "Can I have one of those?"

He was so close to her that she could smell the cologne that he'd had sprayed himself with earlier. Piper reached for the small pack and opened it before handing it over. Billy's finger tips grazed against her as he grabbed it from her hand, quickly reaching for the lighter she held out.

"You're welcome." She scuffed before taking another drag. He muttered a muffled thanks as he tried to lit the cigarette.

Piper stood and watched him struggle, before throwing her to her feet and smashing it. "Give me that" She spoke while taking the lighter from his hands and holding it out for him.

Billy's eyes locked with hers as he took a half a step forward and let the cigarette light. But he didn't step back as he took a long drag and blew the smoke off to the side. Piper placed the lighter back into her pocket, but stayed standing in front of Billy as he smoked.

"You're the chief's kid, aren't you?" He spoke after a long pause.

"Niece." She rolled her eyes

"Oh? That's not what I heard." Billy chuckled and swayed slightly.

"Can't really trust the people of Hawkins" Piper sighed softly "Just like all the things I've heard about you. Seems you have the attention of everyone at school than me."

"Do you blame them, doll?" Billy smirked before taking another drag.

Before she could even respond, Piper heard her name being called from the patio of the house. She looked over Billy's shoulder to see Jonathan pushing his way through the crowd on the stairs, looking frantically from side to side. Bill turned around to look in the direction she was and laughed a little louder.

"Your boyfriend looking for you?"

"He's not my boyfriend" She moved around him and walked towards her friend, the moment Jonathan saw her, she could see the relief wash over his face. "Where'd you go?"

"I got pulled towards the living room, it was like I was lost in a sea of teenagers." He laughed nervously. "Uh...y-you care if I take Nancy home? She's pretty wasted and I can't find Steve."

"Jonathan...I came to this party for you." She looked around the party knowing full well if he left that she'd be sitting a corner and that wasn't how she wanted to be spending her birthday.

"I know. I know and I promise to come back once I have her home safe." Jonathan shoved his hands into his jean pockets and stared down at the girl in front of him. Jonathan didn't know why he always felt the need to always look out and take care of Nancy. But ever since last year he couldn't shake that feeling off and he didn't have the time to explain it to Piper in the moment – not matter how mad she was gonna be at him.

"You promise to come back?" She folded her hands across her chest.

"Yes. I promise. Find Steve for me and let him know what's going on? I saw them get into a fight earlier and I think that's why he's sorta run off."

Piper nodded her head "Yeah. You go. I'll find Steve and possibly have a drink."

She went to step around him and head towards the house more. But she stopped when she felt a hand on her bicep. Piper looked back up towards Jonathan and gave him a puzzling look.

"Was that Bill Hargrove I saw you talking to earlier?" He asked, his eyes going back to the little corner they were standing in before, even though Billy was long gone.

"Yeah. He just bummed me for a smoke." She hesitated "Why do you care?"

"I-I don't...just looking out for you."

Jonathan gave her a small smile before leaving and walking around the house towards his car where he already placed Nancy into the backseat. Piper moved towards the kitchen where she saw a punch bowl sitting on the counter, grabbing a red solo cup and filling it before taking a drink. Her last cup forgotten some where in the backyard. She leans up against the counter and scanned over the crowd and looking for Harrington, but her eyes quickly found someone else.

Piper threw her head back as she let out another laugh, the hand not holding her drink up in the air as she danced to the music with others on the designated dance floor. She smiled towards a girl she didn't know, before taking a drink from her cup. The music seemed to grow louder as she stumbled through the crowd to grab another drink from the punch bowl, deep down she knew that she'd probably regret drinking as much as she was. But seeing as it had nearly been over two hours since Jonathan left with Nancy and he still wasn't back.

"Looks like you're having fun." a deep voice spoke from behind her. When she turned around she was once again met with Billy's smirking face.

"What? Not allowed to?" She smiled and took another sip. "I mean you of all people are having the most fun, Keg King."

Billy licked her lower lip and nodded his head and he stepped closer to her, Piper couldn't help her eyes slowly moving down his bare chest that was exposed thanks to the leather jacket he was wearing that was left open.

"Like what you see?" He bent down slightly so his eyes would meet hers. She bit down on her lower lip lightly as a blush covered her

cheeks. Piper shrugged her shoulders before turning away from him and heading back towards the dance floor.

The party slowly started to die down and Piper finally came to the conclusion that Jonathan wasn't going to come back for her. She should've known from the very start that he wasn't going to. She looked towards a clock that was hanging on the wall and saw it was close to midnight and that she should be heading home. Hopper thought that she was spending over at Nancy's for the night, but she'd come up with some excuse in the morning for why she was there. Piper grabbed her bag from the spot she'd left it in the kitchen and double checked everything inside to make sure nothing was missing.

"Fucking Byers," She sighed heavily, her buzz from earlier slowly becoming less and less.

She walked out of the house and onto the street, the front lawn littered with passed out teens and empty cups and beer cans. As she walked down the empty road the only noise she could hear were her heels against the pavement as she walked. Piper had to of been no more than two blocks away before she heard the rev of an engine. She turned around quickly to look over her shoulder and knew immediately who it was as her eyes watched the blue camero drive towards her. Billy slowed down as he approached the girl, rolling down his passenger side window and leaned over the center counsel.

"Get in." He spoke with a slight tone of authority in his voice.

"And why should I get in the car with you?" She gripped the car door and leaned into it slightly.

"Cause I wouldn't be a gentleman if I let you walk all the way home." He bit down on his lower lip before reaching for the door handle and popping the door open. Piper hesitated for a moment before quickly getting inside.

Billy leaned back in his seat as he pulled away from the curb quickly and sped down the road, towards the direction she told him to get to her house.

"What happened to your friend?" Billy asked

Piper shrugged her shoulders "Hell if I know. Guessing he got caught up with something." Piper leaned back into the passenger seat sighing softly as she felt the cold air move through the car as Billy drove with the windows down. "Some birthday."

Billy looked towards her quickly "Birthday?"

"Yeah," She turned her head towards him "It's my seventeenth birthday today. I went to that party for Jonathan, thinking we'd have some fun. But he ditched me."

"Well that's not a very 'friend' thing to do." Billy spoke as he turned down the street that lead into the part of the woods the cabin was in.

"You can drop me here." She spoke "Your car isn't gonna make it much farther."

Piper opened the door quickly and grabbed her bag, and she was no more than a step from the car before she heard her name being called from behind her.

"Happy Birthday, Piper." Billy smirked, before throwing his car into reverse and heading back down the street. Once again Piper couldn't help the blush that covered her cheeks.

When she finally made it back to the cabin, Piper couldn't help but notice not seeing Hopper's police truck on her way up. She thought for sure she was gonna have to come up with a lie on the spot, expecting to walk into Hopper and El laying on the couch watching a movie. Piper did the distinct knock that she and her Uncle were to do to let El know that they were home. When she opened the door the entire cabin was almost encased in darkness, the only sound coming from El's room, the door closed and the cable from the TV sticking out of the crack at the bottom. Piper instantly knew that Hopper never made it tonight for the plans he had with El, and she couldn't help the guilt that sat in her stomach. *I was off partying as El was left alone in the cabin.*

Piper dropped her bag into her room before walking further down and knocking on El's bedroom door. "Hey, kid, it's me." She spoke loudly to talk over the TV.

The door almost instantly popped open and she pushed the door open a little more to peek her head inside. El was bundled on her bed with her eyes trained on the TV in front of her. The soft blue light from the TV being the only light source in the room. Piper leaned against the door frame and looked towards the girl with a sad smile.

"Guess he never showed up tonight?" Piper asked

"Late." El sighed and turned her head towards her, her face twisting into confusion. Piper looked down over herself before her eyes met back with El's. "It's a costume...for a party."

"Party?" El looked even more confused.

"Uh...yeah, I went with Jonathan." Piper shrugged her shoulders "Lot's of music and dancing."

"Dancing." El waited for a moment before looking back towards the movie.

"Can I join you?" Piper kicked off her shoes and pushed her hair away from her face and into a ponytail with the scrunchie that was on her wrist. "It is my birthday and I would love to spend the rest of it with you."

El smiled slightly and nodded her head, before moving over on her bed to make room for Piper. She moved to close the door behind her, before getting into the bed beside El and pulling the blanket back over them.

"You stink like beer" El spoke after a moment as she rested against Piper's chest.

"Sorry." Piper chuckled "A side effect of parties. Let's uh...not let Hopper know about that. Promise? It'll be our little secret."

El nodded her head and smiled and let out a soft laugh. "Promise."

No more than thirty minutes after Piper had come home, she heard Hopper's truck outside, before he was pounding on the door – begging El to let him inside and apologizing for being late.

"Come on, kid. Let me in! I'm gonna freeze to death out here."

Piper nudged El's shoulder and gave her a stern look. "Let him in."

El rolled her eyes before looking towards the direction of the cabin and turning her head slightly, the sound of the front door opening and Hopper quickly closing it. Both of the girls listened as Hopper moved towards El's bedroom door, trying to open it, but El had locked it moment before he could open it. Hopper talked of being held up, and that being why he was late. But Piper could tell by the look on her face that she wasn't having it. Piper bent down and kissed the top of her head, before whispering that she'd be right back. She moved off the bed and reached for the door, opening it enough to see her uncle sitting on the couch and unwrapping candy. His head turned towards the door to the sound of it opening, but looked confused as he saw his niece, and not Eleven.

"What are you doing home? And why are you dressed like that? I thought you were at Nancy's" Hopper spoke with a mouth full of nugget.

Piper closed the door tightly behind her before moving to the couch. "It's a costume, and I decided to come home. Wasn't having that much fun."

"A costume? For what?"

"We...uh...went trick or treating with the kids." Piper lied, but made sure to keep her face straight.

"Nice try." Hopper laughed "I can smell the alcohol on ya. But I won't press you. At least not now."

Piper relaxed slightly and grabbed candy from the pail sitting on her uncle's lap. "What happened to movie and candy with El?"

"Got held up with something at work and lost track of time." He sighed heavily

"Just make it up to her tomorrow morning. Maybe make a big breakfast with Eggo's. You know how much she loves those." Piper smiled. "It's ok that things slip through your fingers, Uncle Hop."



He sighed and nodded his head "It's good that you're here for her too. I think I would feel even worse if she was locked up here all alone all the time."

Piper smiled "She's become like...my little sister in a way."

Hopper smiled even wider before opening his arms out to her, Piper moving quickly to rest against her uncles side and resting into him.

"I know I said it this morning, but Happy Birthday, sweetheart."

Piper looked up towards him "Thank you."

## 4. School Days

### Chapter Four

#### School Days

Piper let out a groan as the sun peeked through the window and across her eyes as she laid in her bed. Her hands blindly reached down and grabbed the edge of her comforter to pull it over her eyes. She didn't get to relax for long as the door to her bedroom opened, the door banging against the a joining wall and causing her shelves to shake slightly.

"Rise and shine!" Hopper spoke loudly as he walked into her room. His voice and the sound of his work boots against the hardwood floor making her headache even worse. *Why did I drink so much?*

"No" She whined from beneath the covers "Go away"

Hopper chuckled softly as he walked towards the window, pulling the drapes apart to let more sun into the room. He turned around towards the bed where his niece laid and grabbed the blankets, roughly pulling the fro her face. Her green eyes glaring up towards him, Hopper's smirk just widened more.

"Come on, breakfast is ready." He tapped her side gently before standing up straight and walking out the door. "I need your help today with getting some stuff for the house from town after school today."

She sat up slowly and rubbed her eyes before pushing her hair from her face. She knew better than to argue with her Uncle. Unlike her mom who was the obvious laid back and more carefree sibling of the Hopper Household, Jim was the more strict and "do as I say" type of guy. Piper slipped her feet into the slippers that always sat at her beside, before begrudgingly walking into the main part of the cabin. El was already sitting at the table eating cereal, her eyes looked towards the teen as she walked out of the bedroom.

"You look terrible." El spoke with a concerned look on her face.

"Thanks, kid" Piper laughed, wincing slightly as her head panged a little harder.

Hopper turned from the counter with a glass full of OJ in one hand and Tylenol in the other. He passed both to Piper before pulling out his chair to eat his breakfast.

"Don't think because I'm not yelling at you means that I'm not upset with you." Hopper spoke before taking a sip of his coffee. "While I'm at work I'll be thinking of some sort of punishment."

Piper set down the empty glass before taking a seat beside El and started to eat breakfast. "I didn't do anything bad. Just...had a little fun on my birthday. Is that really cause for punishment?"

Hooper gave her a look that made her believe that he wasn't gonna be letting up. The three of them finished up breakfast before Hooper left for work. Piper showered quickly and almost felt better from this morning, but it seemed the headache that she woke up with was here to stay for a little longer.

She threw on a pair of jeans and a over-sized sweater, before slipping on her boots. As she grabbed her backpack from the floor, she turned towards El and smiled towards her.

"I'll be back later. Don't get into any trouble."

El gave her a soft smile before nodding her head, before Piper headed towards the door and down towards the road. She could already hear the engine of Jonathan's car as she walked down through the path from the cabin. She stopped right before the side of the car and crossed her hands over her chest.

"I know...I know." Jonathan sighed as he rushed to get out of the car and moved around to stand in front of her.

"You didn't come back, Byers." She glared towards him "I had to find my own way home in a town I barely knew because my best friend told me he'd come back. But he didn't. He left me."

"Piper..."

"No." She cut him off and raised a finger towards his face "You promised."

"I know, and I'm really really sorry." He gently grabbed her finger to move it from his face "Things were much more complicated that I thought last night. I felt bad, and didn't wanna leave her."

Piper sighed softly and relaxed slightly "You're too nice and sweet for your own good."

She reached down and grabbed the door handle and opened it before getting inside. Jonathan rushed around quickly to get back, quickly driving towards the school.

"So does that mean that I'm forgiven?"

"Maybe. Depends on how severe Hopper punishes me tonight."

He grimaced slightly "He get that mad last night?"

"It's kind of my own fault. I was watching a movie when he came home late last night. I could've just stayed in the room so he possibly wouldn't find out. But..." Piper let the sentence hang and just slightly shrugged her shoulders. "As much as my Uncle tries to act all tough and hard, I know that he had a soft spot."

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It was mid through the school day and all Piper felt like she needed was another cup of coffee, a long nap, and a cigarette. But she had left her pack at home and didn't have enough time during lunch to get a coffee. So she was struggling hard through the day. After placing her bag into her locker she walked towards the back of the school to work on her homework on the bleachers during her free period. Her foot tapped anxiously as she looked through her science book, her homework making her head hurt even more. She reached up and rubbed her temples slightly and closed her eyes.

The loud sound of the back door of the gym made her jump up and quickly turn towards the sound. A large group of boys walked out, patting each other on the back and nearly shouting as they walked out – and at the forefront was Billy. He rubbed a towel against his

bare chest, his hair matted back from the sweat. A soft blush came over her cheeks as her eyes slowly scanned over his body. She seemed to snap out of it and quickly look away when his head turned towards her direction.

"Fuck" She cursed low under her breath before she quickly started to gather her books and throw them back into her bag. But just as she moved to stand from the bottom of the bleachers, she turned and came face to face with Billy's chest.

"Jesus Christ." Piper backed up quickly and looked up towards him. "Scare people much?"

"Sorry, doll" He smirked and reached into the pocket of his gym shorts and pulled out a pack of cigarettes and walked around to sit down on the bleacher bench.

Piper turned around and watched him quickly light one before taking a drag and blowing out the smoke. She set her bag down and held her hand out to him, causing him to look up at her with a confused look.

"Pay up." She pointed towards his back.

"Excuse me?" He reached up and pulled the cigarette from his lips with his thumb and pointer finger, before slowly blowing out the smoke.

"You too drunk last night to remember, Keg King?" She cocked an eyebrow towards him "You bummed a smoke off me and drove me home."

The crease between his eyebrows seemed to deepen before a slow smile spread across his face and he began to nod his head.

"Birthday girl." Billy smirked before reaching down and grabbing a cigarette for her. She greedily took it before lighting it. Her body seeming to release all the tension as she took the first long drag.

Piper sat back down beside him and took a couple more before grossing her legs and flicking the ash off to the side. Billy watched her as she looked straight forward and anxiously started to tap her

foot.

"How'd the rest of your birthday go? The boyfriend ever come back?"

Billy couldn't help but keep his crystal blue eyes locked with her green as she turned her head back to him.

"Jonathan isn't my boyfriend."

"You sure he knows that?" Billy smirked before flicking his cigarette and smashing it with his sneaker

Piper looked towards him confused. "Jonathan is a family friend, and I know for a fact I'm not the one he has a crush on. Why does it matter to you?"

"It doesn't" Billy shrugged and sat up a little straighter.

"And the rest of my birthday was good." She took another smoke and looked back towards the woods "After you dropped me off I just watched a movie till my Uncle came home."

"You get in trouble?"

"I find out tonight." Piper chuckles softly

Billy's next sentence was cut off but the sound of the bell ending free period. Piper stood quickly and smashed her cigarette with her foot, before smiling and turning to Billy.

"See you later, Keg King." She smiled before quickly walking towards the school and disappearing into the crowd of students.

Billy stood up and grabbed the towel from the bleachers and watched Piper till he couldn't see her any more. He began to walk towards the school and couldn't explain the feeling that was sitting in the pit of his stomach. For the first time since he's moved to Hawkins, she was so far the only person to not annoy or disgust him. Billy both loved and hated how the girls acted around him. It fed his ego but at the end of it he was disgusted with himself. He knew he was no longer the guy he used to be back in California. But it was like he couldn't stop himself.

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Piper held tightly to the strap of her backpack as she walked towards the parking lot, pulling the list from her back pocket, looking over what Hooper needed her to grab. When she walked into the parking lot she looked around and noticed that Jonathan's car was gone already.

"Are you fucking kidding me?" She spoke to herself, knowing automatically that he left her. Again.

She looked around the parking lot and saw that it was emptying quickly, not that she could really ask anyone for a ride. She didn't really know anyone else. The only other person that came to mind was Steve, but she didn't know what his car looked like from memory. *Fucking Byers*. For some reason deep down she knew that Nancy was the reason for him already being gone. That boy was so in love that he couldn't help himself when it came to her.

Just as the dreadful thought of walking back home came into her mind, the sound of an engine came up towards her. When she looked to her right she saw the blue Camaro driving towards her, Billy leaning over the center console.

"Need a ride again?" He smirked

Piper looked over her shoulder when she heard a noise from behind her, and her eyes landed on a group of girls leaning against the car. She knew from the looks and the whispering that they were talking about her. She nodded her head before reaching for the handle and quickly getting into the car. Billy pulled away from the parking lot, leaving smoke in his place. The loud sound of Metallica blasted through the speakers as he sped down the road.

"Seems for the second time I come to your rescue. Might have to start charging you." Billy spoke after turning down the volume.

"And what would I be paying you in? Cigarettes?"

He shrugged his shoulder and smirked "Maybe. I'm sure I can think of something."

Piper shook her head "You know you don't have to turn on your bad boy charm with me. It's not gonna work."

Billy turned towards her and cocked his eyebrow for a moment before turning back towards the road. "And why is that?"

"Because I'm not from this small podunk town and you're not the first hot 'bad boy' I've come across." Piper froze for a moment after realizing what she just said.

"So you think I'm hot? Good to know."

"I-I..." She sighed softly and closed her eyes "Fuck."

Billy laughed and turned towards the town "Relax. You didn't say anything bad. It's a good thing to know."

Piper sunk deeper into her chair as the heat on her cheeks increased. Billy couldn't help the smile that was across his face as he drove towards downtown Hawkins.

"Y-You can drop me off in the town center. I've gotta get stuff for the house." She spoke quickly, wanting nothing more than to get out of this car.

The rest of the car ride was in silence, before Billy pulled up in front of the grocery store, idling the car as he turned towards Piper.

"Thanks, Billy" She whispered shyly, grabbing her bag from the floor of the car.

"No problem at all, Birthday girl." Billy smirked

"It's not my birthday anymore." She shook her head "My name is Piper."

She got out of the car and closed the door behind her, and quickly walked into the store. Billy once again sitting there and waiting till he couldn't see her anymore.



## 5. Explosion

### Chapter Five

#### Explosion

Piper sighed heavily as she dropped the grocery bags onto the floor beside the front door before digging around in her pocket for the front door key. When she finally found it, she unlocked the door quickly, before pushing the old door open and slamming it shut with her foot. She carried the bags over into the kitchen and dropped everything beside the table. El watched from the table as she moved around the kitchen and quickly began to place things into cabinets, the fridge and the freezer.

"You have a good day today?" Piper asked as she finally sat down and opened up a water bottle. The long walk from town was almost enough to exhaust her completely.

El just gently shrugged her shoulder and looked down to fiddle with her fingers. Piper looked towards her confused, scanning over to see that she was completely dressed and in one of her jackets.

"Why are you wearing my coat?" Piper moved to lean forward slightly and rested her elbows on the top of the table. After a long pause of silence she spoke up again. "El, why are you wearing my coat?"

The girl looked up towards her with a slight frown on her face. "Mike."

Piper was even more confused now. "Mike? What does wearing my coat have to do with Mike?"

Eleven hesitated and bit down on her lower lip as Piper stared down towards her with a confused look on her face. Even though she wasn't there last year, Piper was fully brought up to date on almost everything. Meaning she was also aware of who Mike was, and how he was important to El. Piper hadn't really gotten to know him. Only see him a few times when she was over at the Byers house hanging with Jonathan and he was with Will.

"Eleven, come on you gotta be honest with me kid." Piper reached across and gently grabbed her hand to bring the girls attention back towards her.

"I-I went to see him."

"Like through the TV?" El shook her head. Piper knew of El's powers and knew she would check on her friends sometimes using the frequency of the TV system. She also knew that Hopper knew, but probably not to the degree as Piper did. He'd only caught her a handful of times. But Piper could hear her every other night through the walls messing with the channels. The more she thought about it, slowly, the pieces started to come together on what the girl really meant.

"You left the cabin?" Piper asked and Eleven slowly nodded her head.

Piper jumped up and ran her fingers through her hair and cursed beneath her breath as she paced. Eleven slowly shrunk back into her seat and watched the girl pace back and forth.

Piper quickly turned towards her and knelt down in front of her, grabbing El's face to make her eyes meet hers. "Did anyone at all see you?" Eleven shook her head. "Are you positive?" Eleven hesitated and shrugged her shoulders.

"If Hopper finds out." Piper whispered and before the thought could fully leave her mouth, the front door burst open with a very angry Hopper standing in the door way. Piper jumped up quickly and stood in front of Eleven. Not that she thought Hopper would do anything to her, but also knew that Eleven could fully take care of herself.

"Now...Uncle Jim before you lose your mind."

"Where did you go?" Hopper moved closer to them, the anger vibrating off his frame. "Huh? Where did you go?"

From behind her Piper could feel El stand from the table and storm around her and towards her bedroom. Piper watched as her Uncle followed after her screaming asking where she had gone over and over.

"Uncle Jim!" Piper followed after him as he pushed the bedroom door open.

"No one saw!" Eleven shouted back towards him.

"Yeah. So you thought. A mother and daughter did and they called the cops. Who else saw you?"

"No one" She spoke with more anger in her voice. "I-I don't know."

"Think damn it! Who else saw? Cause you put us in danger with going out there!" Hopper yelled, his fist tightening its hold on the door frame."

"You promised! You promised no more hiding and I could see him!" Eleven screamed.

"Ok, let's calm down. I'm sure it's not as bad as we're all thinking right now." Piper moved to gently grab his forearm to place her self between the two of them.

"No! She needs to learn that there are rules. And rules need to be followed in order for everyone in this household to be safe"

"You lie! All the time! Just lie!" Eleven screamed towards him.

"You know what, you're not listening and you're gonna have to learn." Hopper turned from the door and started to move around the cabin picking random things up. "You're grounded! No Eggo's! No TV"

Eleven let out a scream and charged forward and stiffened her stance, her concentration on the TV. Hopper pulled and tugged on the cart the TV was on, but it didn't move. No matter the amount of force he used, it would not budge. His eyes glared towards Eleven and he stood up straight.

"Let up on it. Now!" He screamed. Eleven kept her concentration and shook her head. "Let up, or it's gonna be a month"

That TV was Eleven's life line. Her form of entertainment and her connection to Mike.

Hopper stood up straight and glared towards her. "Fine! You're really gonna learn." He reached down and yanked the cord from the TV. Disconnecting it completely. "No TV, period."

Piper reached up and plugged her ears to block the sound of the scream that emitted from Eleven. Her instinct was to hit the floor as she felt glass shatter around her and falling to the floor. Her head perked up when she heard the bedroom door close. Piper watched as sobs took over Eleven's body, and she reached quickly to catch the girl as she fell. Her arms wrapping around her as she cried. Piper had never seen Eleven use her powers to the intense force she just showed. She wasn't gonna lie if she didn't feel a little fear. But seeing her cry and shake with pain made her feel protective of the girl in her arms.

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After she had finally calmed down, Piper gently picked El up and placed her into her bed and tucked her in. She walked to find cleansing cloths and gently wiped the blood from her nose. She looked towards her one more time before opening her bedroom door. Hopper looked towards the door the moment he heard movement. Hoping it was El, but sighed heavily when he saw that it was only his niece. She closed the door behind her tightly and crossed her arms over her chest, glaring towards the man in front of her. His shoulder's slumped and he ran his hand over his tired face.

"You couldn't have been a little gentler?" Her voice calm. No indication to how she was feeling. For moment it gave Hopper chills how much she looked liked his sister. He saw his late sister in Piper a lot. But now it was scary. "She's only a kid."

"She knows the rules" He tried to defend. "We have them to make sure she is kept safe and that they don't find her."

"I know. But she is still a kid. Cut off from her friends and the rest of the world. She lives in fear in this cabin, and all she wants is to see Mike. To feel like she's not alone." Piper walked across the cabin, her feet walking across crushed glass. "I get why you're mad, Uncle Jim. But I also see her point."

Hopper nodded his head and moved to sit down on the couch and

rest his elbows on his knees. Piper walked across to join her Uncle, lopping her arm through his and resting her head on his shoulder.

"Since when did you become the adult?" He chuckled softly

"One of us has to." She smirked and pulled back to look towards him. "You're doing a good job . I know it's not easy with two teenage girls in the house. But you just sometimes gotta let us have our moment." He nodded his head "Give her some time to cool down, and then talk. And I mean talk. No grounding. No yelling. I don't know if this cabin can have another night like tonight."

The two of them looked around the cabin and saw that nearly every window was blown out. Debris across the floor and the chill air seeping into the cabin causing the both of them to shudder. Piper gave her Uncle a gentle kiss on the cheek before standing and walking back to her bedroom. She changed quickly into her pj's before grabbing her thick blanket off her bed and walking back towards Eleven's room. She quietly walked in and saw she was still sleeping, and moved into the bed beside her. Eleven let out a soft whimper in her sleep, and cuddled more into Piper chest as she wrapped both the blanket and her arms around the small girl.

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Piper woke up before everyone else, quickly getting ready for school, before leaving. She knew Hopper was supposed to be up and leaving for work. But she didn't have the heart to wake him after what had happened last night. Piper pulled tighter on her jacket as she walked along the street, the crisp morning making her body shake with a chill. She hadn't heard from Jonathan since he disappeared last night and she wasn't gonna stand around and see if he as gonna pick her up.

When she finally arrived at school the parking lot was nearly full and she didn't see his car. As she walked in, she looked down the hallway to see Bill standing at his own. Piper couldn't help but watch him for a moment as he grabbed his books and turned to head to class. The sound of the first period bell snapped her out of her trance before she grabbed her own things. As she was walking towards class she also couldn't help but notice that Steve wasn't with Nancy. After leaving school yesterday she had heard a new rumors about them breaking

up. Piper felt a little sympathy for him, full knowing that Nancy had a thing for Jonathan even if she didn't herself.

"And by the end of the month you will work in groups of two to finish the project."

Piper blushed slightly as she walked into the classroom a little late, earning a look from the teacher, as she moved to her seat. Once again she found herself to be sitting next to none other than Billy Hargrove. As she took her seat, the blush deepened more as she made eye contact towards him.

"And I've already made the groups for you, so don't think you can join your friends on this." The teacher grabbed the list she made from her desk, the class letting out a conjoined groan.

One by one the teacher went down the list, with student either being happy or upset with whomever they were paired up with. It wasn't till nearly the end that Piper knew that she was matched with. And she didn't know whether to be grateful or scared.

"Piper Canton and Billy Hargrove." The teacher spoke.

Billy smiled and leaned over and whispered for only her to hear. "Guess we're going to be working together, birthday girl."

"So when do you wanna meet?" Billy asked after finally catching up to her as everyone filed into the hallway to head towards their next class.

"Uh, I don't have plans tonight. Or tomorrow." Piper shrugged and stopped before turning towards him. "We just can't meet at my place."

Billy gave her a weird look before nodding his head. "Alright. Whatever. My folks are gone tonight for some stupid party. We can start then."

"O-Ok." She shifted nervously. Almost instantly the rumors of Billy and all the other girls came to her head. "Yeah. We can do that."

"Cool." He smirked "Meet me after school, I'll drive us to my place and then I'll take ya home. Unless you wanna have Byer's escort you."

"No. No." Piper shook her head. "I haven't heard from him so I'd appreciate that."

"Alright. I'll see you later, birthday girl"

She rolled her eyes at what seemed to be her new nickname from him as Billy walked around her and down the hall towards his next class.

## **6. Detroit, bitches**

### **Chapter Six**

#### **Detroit, bitches**

Piper gripped tightly to her towel as she walked back to her gym locker from the showers. As she walked passed the other lockers, she noticed the glares she'd received from Carol and her group of friends. She shared a glass with them in English and noticed the same glares when she was partnered with Billy. Piper rolled her eyes as she unlocked her locker and quickly pulled out her change of clothes. She wasn't gonna lie, Piper was nervous of going to Billy's tonight. She didn't know why she had butterflies in her stomach, but they wouldn't go away. She sighed softly as she pulled her clothes from her locker and quickly began to change into her clothes. She had just finished putting on her pullover hot pink sweater when she heard a throat clear from behind her. When Piper turned around, she came face to face with none other than Carol and her posse standing behind her.

Carol was small town pretty. With her mousy face, big brown eyes and hair that seemed to always perfectly fall down her back. She looked like every other average girl. But Piper had to role her eyes when she saw who was standing behind her. With Carol's arms crossed at her chest, she scowled at the girl in front of her.

"Carol," Piper sighed "To what do I owe the pleasure for this visit."

"Heard that you're going to Billy Hargrove's house tonight." Carol spoke

"And?"

"And don't think to fucking try anything" Carol stepped closer "Billy is mine and you should be wise not to do anything with him. If I hear that you even so much as smiled at him, I will make your life here hell."

Piper tried to fight back her laughter, but instead she failed. Piper



moved to cover her mouth as she heard Carol's idle threats. The laughter seemed to falter the teen girls stance, since she looked down at Piper confused.

"What the hell is your problem, did you not understand what I said?

"No, no. I did." Piper laughed before she reached down and grabbed her backpack, and threw it over her shoulder. "I'm just laughing at the fact that you think that was gonna work on me." Piper took one step closer towards Carol, slightly looking down at the girl in front of her "You don't scare me. You're never going to scare me. Threaten me all you want but know I'm not from here. I'm from Detroit, sweetie, and we handle bitches like you a little differently." She looked her up and down. "So take that as my warning."

Piper scuffed before walking around them, slightly pumping against Carol's shoulder as she walked away. Piper wasn't phased by anything that Carol said. She has dealt with worse bullies back home. The final bell rang as she walked out into the hallway, and as she walked down the hall, she grabbed her scrunchie and pulled back her hair from her face.

---

Piper stood against the far wall of the parking lot, her foot tapping anxiously as she waited for Billy. She brought her cigarette to her lips and took a long drag, before blowing the smoke out to her left. As she waited she watched as people left, and even noticed the kids that Will usually hanging out with rushing towards their bikes with a red headed girl following behind them. She quickly realized that it was Billy's little sister.

"You ready to go, birthday girl?"

Piper jumped slightly to the sound of a voice, and looked to her side to notice Bill smirking towards her. She dropped her cigarette and smashed it with her foot as she turned towards him.

"You scared the shit out of me," She sighed softly as she looked towards him. Noticing the smirk still on his face and how it reached his eyes. *He has really pretty eyes.*

"Sorry, doll." Billy chuckle. "Come on, we can head back to my place and get started on this shitty project."

He turned and started to walk towards his car, assuming that she was following him. But when Billy turned to look over his shoulder, he noticed she was still standing by the wall. He gave her a confusing look, before walking back towards her.

"You coming?"

She nodded "I wanna get one thing straight first before we leave."

Billy was even more confused now. "Ok, and that would be?"

He bent down slightly so their eyes were level with each other, slightly distracting Piper. "I'm not one of these po-dunk small town girls, and don't even think a smile is gonna make me sleep with you."

"Whoa." Billy stepped back and put his hands up, "I wasn't thinking that at all, doll."

"Good." She smiled towards him and started to walk towards his car "We're on the same page then, Keg King."

Billy watched with wide eyes as she walked towards his car, opened the passenger side door and got in. Completely comfortable. He chuckled to himself slightly, before shaking his head and walking to his car. Billy knew that Piper wasn't like all the other girls in their school. She was far from it. Different. But good. She was the type of girl that wouldn't take his shit, and constantly keep him on his toes.

Billy started up his car, and instantly heavy metal started blaring through the speakers. He instantly reached forward to turn it down, but Piper shook her head and turned it back up. He looked down towards her for a moment, a smirk on his lips, before he peeled out of the parking lot and sped towards his house.

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Billy was thankful that his father and stepmother were going to be gone till late tonight. The last thing he wanted to worry about was one of them coming home and finding Piper her. That would only cost him later. He sighed heavily as they both walked through the

door, boxes still sitting in the living room and kitchen, left over evidence of their families move. Billy couldn't help but watch Piper as she moved through the rooms and looked around.

"We can work in the dining room," Billy spoke "Or my room?"

She turned around towards him, a slight smirk on her face. "What did I say about making moves?"

Billy chuckled "I promise, I'm not."

Piper's eyes looked down the hall and at a door she assumed was Billy's room. She bit down on her lower lip, before looking back towards him.

"Your room is fine."

Billy nodded his head before walking down the hall and pushing the door opened. Piper didn't know what she thought what his room would look like. But when she saw his room, it was completely and totally Billy. With the heavy metal posters, mixed in were photos of half naked girls, and the dim lights. His bed was dressed with dark, almost black, sheets. A ash tray off to the side on what looked like a vanity, cluttered with random thing. A tall mirror pressed against the wall and clothes spilling from the closet that was slightly open.

"Sorry for the mess," Billy chuckled as he kicked some clothes under this head. *Why the fuck am I nervous*, Billy thought to himself.

Piper shrugged her shoulders, showing that she didn't care, before setting her bag onto the floor. She sat down on the carpet floor and crossed her legs, digging into her backpack and quickly began to pull things out for their English project.

"So how do you wanna start this?" She smiled

---

It had been a few hours since they started working on their English project. Papers strewn throughout his bedroom between the two of them. Billy sat with his back against his bed and Piper beside him. Every one and a while he would shoot glances towards her, smiling at the firm look of concentration on her face. Her plump lower lip

between her teeth.

"I still can't figure out how we can solve this fake solution for these damn families" Piper groaned "They hate each other over something stupid that even Shakespeare couldn't figure out, so he had the two teens kill themselves."

Bill chuckled at her frustration before grabbing the paper from her hands. "Well it's theoretical, we can make it up."

Piper sighed and looked towards the clock that was sitting on his bedside table and cursed slightly. She had been so concentrated on everything she didn't realize how late it was.

"Fuck, my Uncle is gonna kill me." She groaned and started to gather her things.

"Whoa, whoa doll. Slow down." Billy reached down and gently grabbed her wrist, stopping her actions and causing her to look up towards him. "I'll take ya home, and I'm sure your Uncle will understand. We were working on a project. And it's the weekend, how mad can he get?"

"Yeah I'm sure you dropping me off is gonna make it less intense. He'll see a boy and go all "Chief" on me." She chuckled and blushed slightly.

"W-Why do you live with your Uncle?" Bill asked, blurting the question out of his mouth without really thinking. He watched as the smile on Piper's face began to fade, and she slowly pulled away from him. Billy wanted nothing more than to see her face lit up again.

"Uh...that's bit of a heavy topic." She spoke softly and finished gathering up her things.

Billy decided not to push the topic any farther. He helped her grab her things, before the two of them moved off his bedroom floor, and started walking back towards his car. The drive back towards the cabin was mostly in silence, and when they got to the end of the street, Billy turned the engine off and turned towards her.

"I-I'm sorry if I crossed a line." He whispered. *What the fuck. Since*

*when do I care if I hurt someones fucking feelings.*

"No, it's ok." Piper sighed and turned towards Billy. "I'm not dumb. I hear the rumors at school. Everyone thinking I'm Hopper's love child. Or a runaway that he picked up. But I am really his niece."

Billy nodded his head "People can be stupid."

She shrugged her shoulders. "The truth is my parents died in a accident almost a year ago. They were driving back from the mall when a drunk driver struck the car going over 100 mph."

Billy cringed and cursed under his breath, before letting out a heavy sigh. "Shit. I'm sorry"

Piper shrugged her shoulders "It's ok. I'm as sad as I used to be over it."

Billy nodded his head. He knew exactly what she meant. He'd lost his mom and even after all these years it still hurt and he missed her like crazy. Every night he wished that she'd never left and that was with her back in California. Not having to deal with his father. As Billy was sitting in his thought, Piper reached over and grabbed the handle, drawing him out of his thoughts.

"Thanks for the ride, Billy." She smiled towards him before getting out and heading up the trail towards the cabin. Half way up Piper could hear Billy's Camero start up and drive off.

---

The first thing that drew her attention when she walked into the cabin was that it was cleaned up, a little cold, but quite. She looked around not being able to find either El or Hopper. *Maybe they left?* But she knew that wasn't likely, cause Hopper would never risk leaving with El. She walked towards El's room and saw that it was empty and the lights turned off. *What the hell?* She sighed heavily and walked around the cabin but found that she was no where to be seen.

"God damn it, El." Piper sighed before throwing down her bag from her shoulder and rushing towards the phone to call the station. But Hopper's desk phone rang and ran, with no answer.

---

Piper woke up with a groan, her back cracking as she moved up from her position on the couch. The cabin still empty without a sign from Hopper or El. After calling down to the station again and not getting an answer, Piper gathered up her stuff, and started walking towards the road to head into town. She knew if anyone else was to possibly know where Hopper was, it was the Byers. When she rushed up the steps, she knocked furiously on the door hoping for an answer.

"Sweetie?" Joyce looked down towards her confused "J-Jonathan isn't here."

Joyce took a step forward and pulled the door closed tightly behind her.

"I'm not here looking for Jonathan. I'm actually looking for Hopper. He didn't come home at all last night and I'm not getting an answer at the station."

Joyce looked down towards her confused "H-He's not here at all. I've actually been trying to get a hold of him too."

"Fuck," Piper sighed and ran her hands through her hair. "I'm gonna head down to the station. Maybe someone knows where he is?"

Joyce nodded her head and looked over her shoulder back towards the door. "I'll call around and see if someone's heard from him."

Piper looked at Joyce up and down, seeing how nervous she seemed and how she kept looking over her shoulder.

"Is everything ok?" Piper asked, looking at her confused.

"Oh? Yeah." She laughed nervously before smiling down at the girl in front of her. "Will's just sick, been up all night taking care of him."

From behind them the sound of a door pulling up caught their attention. Bob, Joyce's boyfriend, got out of his car with an arm full of board games. He smiled towards the both of them as he walked up towards the house.

"Bob, what are you doing here?" Joyce looked towards him confused.

Piper took that as her cue to leave and started down towards the driveway to head into town and towards the station. She fisted her hands into her coat pocket as she walked, shivering slightly from the cold breeze that seemed to blow through her. She was so lost in her thought that she didn't hear the Camero pull up beside her.

"Birthday girl, what are you doing walking all the way out here?" Bill asked as she leaned across the center console of his car "Get in." She didn't even hesitate as she opened the passenger side door and got inside. "How is it that I'm always saving your ass?"

Piper rolled her eyes "I don't have a car so my only option is to walk. Guess I just gotta be thankful you always seem to be there."

"Why are you walking around the side of the road alone?"

"I'm looking for my Uncle. He didn't come home last night." Piper sighed as she relaxed into her seat with the heat blasting towards her.

Bill nodded his head and drove towards town, pulling up outside of the station and parking the car.

"Thanks, Billy." Piper smiled towards him. "Ya know, you're really not the dick that Steve and some of the school tries to make you out to be."

Billy laughed "Thank you?"

"What?" She shrugged "I can see through that bad boy mask that you try to push out. Cause if that was true then you wouldn't be helping me. You'd just drive right past me and not given a shit."

Billy looked towards her in silence, not really sure what to say. Once again she had left him speechless, before leaving and heading towards the station.

"Hey!" Billy shouted and got out of his car, quickly walking towards her "I'm coming with."

"You sure?" Piper asked and he nodded his head "Don't want you walking alone again in case he's not here. I don't need to pick Max up for another couple of hours."

Piper smiled towards him. "Alright, Hargrove."

Piper reached down and grabbed his hand, leading him up the steps and towards the station. She couldn't help but notice how warm his hand felt in hers, and how it felt right in hers. She blushed slightly as they walked into the station and towards the front desk.

---

Billy and Piper spent hours looking for her Uncle. Soon giving up and sitting in his car at the end of her street. Just talking. Billy didn't know what was happening. But he felt a change. It was like the more he talked to this girl the more she seemed to crack the hard shell he placed around himself. He wanted to spend more time with her. Whenever he dropped her off or she left, he couldn't help but wanna spend more time with her.

"Why are you laughing at me?" Piper chuckled as she looked towards Billy. "It really hurt when I fell on that ice. You try ice skating, with no skates, surfer boy."

"I wouldn't, that's why I'm laughing."

"I was six, I didn't know any better." Piper couldn't help but laugh with him. "Uh thanks for today Billy."

"Thank you? For what?" He looked towards her slightly confused "I just drove you around looking for your Uncle."

"Yeah, but you didn't have to do that. It was nice of you." She smiled "Usually Jonathan is the only person that's able to drive me around. But he's been M.I.A lately and I don't know where he's been."

"It's not a problem at all." Billy shrugged his shoulders "Just don't tell anyone that I've been nice."

"Why"

Billy shrugged "Gotta keep my reputation with these...what do you call them?"

"Po-dunk town teens?" Piper asked with a confused look on her face.



"Yeah, them." Billy shrugged.

"Don't worry, Keg King." Piper reached across and gently pat his lap, before letting her hands rest against his thigh. "Your secret is safe with me."

Billy looked down towards her hand, before changing to look back towards her face, and then her lips. *I want to kiss her. I need to fucking kiss her.* Bill thought to himself, and soon he slowly moved towards her. His eyes looking up to hers to see if she was hesitant. Pulling away, any sign that she didn't want this. But she didn't move.

Billy reached up and grabbed her cheek softly and pulled her towards him, their lips meeting in a soft kiss at first. Piper hesitated at first, before reaching up and wrapping her arms around his neck, her fingers fisting in his hair gently. Their lips moved against each others, the kiss deepening with each second. Bill's hands moving from her cheeks before moving to pull her over the console and to straddle his lap.

"So much for not making any moves," Piper whispered against his lips.

**AN:** Please leave a review with thoughts. I have been asked if Billy is gonna be cannon? And parts of the Billy that we know is still there. Piper isn't gonna change him over night, or if at all. But he'll be a different Billy with her. I think how Billy is a front due to his abuse and mother's death. But that's my opinion.

## **7. Tire Iron Swing**

### **Chapter Seven**

#### **Tire Iron Swing**

The next morning Piper woke up once again, alone, still no sign of either her Uncle or El. After leaving Billy's car she once again tried all night trying to reach her Uncle through the walkie system with no reply from the other end. She got up from her bed and walked towards the bathroom to take a quick shower, noticing almost immediately in the mirror that her lips were still swollen from last night. Piper wasn't still fully sure if she should regret making out with Billy in his car last night. How he acted around her was different from how he acted in school and around his friends. But she also didn't wanna be naive about the situation.

After her shower she changed into a pair of jeans and slipped on her favorite pair of sneakers, along with a hoodie to put on under her winter jacket. If it was gonna be cold like yesterday, she was gonna need it with all the walking around she was gonna be doing. She threw a few things into her backpack in case she got hungry or she was gonna be out late. Piper knew that was something was up. Her Uncle had never been gone this long without a single word from him. She was worried.

After a quick breakfast she headed out towards town, it taking about an hour for her to get to the station just to learn that once again no one had seen her Uncle or heard from him. Piper was walking back towards the Byers' when she saw someone she recognized.

"Steve?" Piper called out, catching his attention as he turned around towards her.

Steve stood beside her holding two buckets of meat, a nailed up bat in his backpack, and standing beside him was Dustin almost with the exact same stuff, except a head seat.

"What the hell are you doing out here?" Steve called out as she walked towards them.

"I've been trying to find my Uncle." She looked down towards Dustin.  
"What's up with the meat?"

Steve and Dustin looked towards each other before looking at her and quickly replying with a 'nothing'. Piper rolled her eyes and gave the both of them a more stern look.

"I know about last year." She quickly informed them. Both of them giving her a shocked look. "My Uncle didn't keep anything from me, and I know that bat" Piper pointed to the bat strapped to Steve's back. "Means something is going on. So I'm going to once again ask, what's with the meat?"

Steve sighed and handed her one of the buckets and pulled a glove from one of his hands. "It's gonna take a long time to catch you up, so you're gonna have to help us out."

---

"So you're telling me that this...lizard...thing ate your cat is now on the loose?" Piper asked as she followed behind Steve down the railroad tracks, throwing down meat onto the floor below them leaving a trail behind.

"It's not a lizard." Dustin answered quickly and turned towards her. "It's a demogorgon"

"Right." She nodded, trying to force her brain to understand what was going on. "So we're leading it to what? Catch it? Kill it?"

"That's the plan." Steve sighed "Cause if we don't it'll continue to grow and that's the last thing we're gonna want."

The three of them continued down the path through the woods and towards the junk yard that was left abandoned. Piper looked over the vast, vacant area and then turned her attention to Dustin.

"This is where we're leading it?" She asked looking down towards the boy.

"Yeah. It's perfect." He looked up towards her. "You dump the rest of the meat in between the school bus and the car, and we'll use the bus as a safe look out area. Steve and I will board it up with whatever we

can find around here."

"You really thought this out, haven't ya kid?" Piper asked with a chuckle.

"We gotta get rid of this thing," Dustin shrugged "Best I could think of."

The three of them split up and went about their respective jobs. Piper dumped the remainder of the meat from both the buckets into the spot Dustin had mentioned before. She tried not to gag at the rank smell that seemed to emit from the pile. Steve came up beside her with a canister of gasoline and dumped it over. She looked up towards him with a confused look on her face.

"Once it gets close enough and starts eating, we light the fucker on fire." Steven answered her unspoken questions, pulling a lighter from his pocket to show her. Piper nodded her head in agreement.

"I'm surprised Hopper told you everything," Steve looked towards her, removing his gloves to push his hair back from his face. "I don't think anyone would believe any of it without proof."

Instantly Piper thought of Eleven, but she couldn't let Steve know about that part. "My uncle has never lied to me. I trust him."

Steve nodded his head, understanding where she was coming from. From across the lot they could hear the sound of someone shouting towards them, and looked up to see Lucas and Max waving towards them.

"The reinforcements are here," Dustin smiled waving them over. "About time."

"What is Billy's sister doing here? Does she know what's going on?"

Steve looked over towards the two teens rushing towards them, a confused look on his face as well. Piper looked down and nudged Dustin who shrugged his shoulders before rushing to meet with Lucas.

"How do you know that's Hargrove's sister?" Steve asked

"Billy and I are..." She left the sentence hanging, not fully knowing what title to give them. *Friends? Are we friends?* "Project partners for English. Was over his house the other day and saw pictures." Piper lied quickly on her feet.

Steve nodded his head, accepting the answer, before moving around to place random car parts around the bus to use it as a shield. Piper threw her bag into the bus and riffled around the lot looking for things that she could use for a weapon, just in case. The only thing she came across was a tire iron. She pocketed it into her back pocket and moved around, Max helping her grabbing stuff to place around the bus.

"So how did you get roped into this?" Max asked her as they carried a car door towards the bus "They tell you some elaborate story too?"

Piper chuckled and shook her head. "My Uncle filled me on most of it, but then Dustin and Steven caught me on the current stuff. What about you?"

"Lucas told me some wild story. I don't fully believe it, but they seem to so I'm here to get my proof." She smiled towards her, before giving her a weird look. "You're the girl my step brother has been hanging around with right?"

Piper gave her a weird look. "H-How do you know that?"

"I saw you two around town yesterday. He dropped me off at the arcade, and then I saw you two by the station. You were holding hands..." Max shrugged her shoulders.

"Your stepbrother and I are..." Piper bit down on her lips, the memory of this make-out session in his car came to her memory. "*English project partners.*"

Piper decided to keep with the same answer she gave Steve.

"Oh, that's too bad." Max sighed and brushed her long red hair from her face. "You seem cool. Thought maybe you're the one he's going on a date with tonight."

Piper's back straightened up slightly and look towards Max with wide

eyes. "D-Date?"

Max could see the look in Piper's eyes before she covered it up quickly, and turned away to head back towards the pile of rubble. Max couldn't help but feel she just gave information that wasn't supposed to.

---

Night fell over the lot quickly, everything set with the five of them safely boarded into the bus. Steve sat towards the front of the bus on one of the benches, flicking the lighter in his hand over and over. Dustin seemed to be nervous, pacing back and forth over the length of the bus with Max sitting down beside Piper. She had found two more tire irons in the lot and made sure they were close by in case. Piper had never seen a demogorgon, but from Dustin's description it was scary looking. Lucas sat at the top of the bus with binoculars.

"Are you sure it wasn't a bear? Or maybe a stray dog? I mean Hawkins is surrounded by woods." Max asked as she watched Dustin pace.

"No it wasn't a dog. Or a bear." He huffed "If you don't believe us, then leave and go home."

Max scuffed and shook her head before heading towards the ladder and going up to join Lucas. Steve chuckled slightly and shook his head.

"That's it man, show her you don't care." He nodded his head as he flipped open his lighter again.

"I don't care." Dustin spoke defensively.

"Oh for the love of god, please don't tell me you're giving this boy lame ass dating advice." Piper spoke rolling her eyes "Cause that is the dumbest thing I have ever heard."

"What? It totally works." Steve threw his hands up in defense. "I would know."

"Oh really." Piper chuckled and shook her head "And that's worked out so well for you Steve? I've heard of this shit going on with Nancy."

Showing you don't care if the opposite of what you should be doing." Piper stood and walked across to sit next to Steve. "If you like a girl Dustin, you tell her. Don't play games. Because in the end it ends up irritating us."

Dustin looked down towards Piper for a moment as if he was thinking, before nodding his head.

"So you're the love expert here then?" Steve asked with a smirk.

"I think between the two of us here, I have more knowledge than you do, Harrington."

Steve let out a loud laugh. "You've got balls, Canon. If you're the expert maybe then you can tell me what the hell is going on with Nancy."

Piper cringed "I don't know if I should get into that mess. I mean, I know the answer to your question, but you're not gonna like what I have to tell you."

Steve looked towards her confused, but before either of them could say a word, the sound of a loud shriek sounded from the woods. The sound sent fear straight through Piper's body and she quickly turned to look out the window, and searched along the tree lines for a source.

"You see anything?" Dustin asked as another shriek sounded, this time closer.

"No." Steve and Piper spoke at the same time, both turning to each other, their fear mirroring into the others facial expression.

"Lucas?! You see anything?" Dustin called up towards the opening the ladder was placed into. Steve reached quickly for his bat, and Piper gripped the large tire iron into her hands.

"You got enough force with that?" Steve asked asking her, his adrenaline starting to course through his veins. Piper nodded her head.

"Softball captain since middle school. I know how to hit something

with some force."

Piper gripped to it tightly and moved to look out towards the window to look for any sign of life.

"Ten o'clock" Lucas shouted from the roof "Ten o'clock."

Piper moved to another window and looked out to see a small, animal like, figure in the fog along the tree line. Right near the pile of meat that Piper had placed earlier. The figure sniffed at it, but wasn't eating at it.

"Why isn't he taking the bait?" Piper asked, turning her attention towards Steve and Dustin.

Dustin shrugged his shoulders "Maybe he's not hungry?"

"Or he's sick of cow." Steve spoke, standing from his position and walking towards the door.

"Whoa! You're not going out there are you?" Piper spoke quickly and walking towards him. "You don't know what you're going out to."

"Well we can't stand around and wait for something to happen." Steve spoke "You got a better idea?"

"Yeah. Back-up." She shrugged off her coat so she'd have better movement. "I'm coming out with you."

"The hell you are!" Steve shouted "You definitely don't know what you're getting yourself into. You weren't here last year! You don't know how these things are!"

"Hey!" Dustin shouted causing them both to look towards him. "Piper coming with you isn't a bad idea. You need back-up Steve."

"Thanks kid," Piper nodded towards him. "I'm not a weak little girl that needs protecting, Harrington." Piper gripped her weapon of choice and moved towards the door. "Now let's go."

Steve huffed and nodded his head, quickly learning that arguing with Piper was gonna waste time they didn't have. She was a stubborn girl



and once her mind was made, it was made and it wasn't gonna change. Steve also got a feeling over the small time her spent with her that she'd have no trouble defending herself.

"Get ready, ok kid? The moment you see an opening you set that fucker on fire." Steven spoke to Dustin, tossing the lighter towards him.

Steve opened the door, Piper close behind him, before Dustin closed it. Piper could feel her heart pounding through her chest as she closely followed behind Steve. He taunted the thing, whatever it was, to get his attention. But the movement of something to Piper's left caught her attention.

"Steve." She spoke with a panicked voice. "S-Steve."

Piper was able to get a clear view of what they were dealing with now. It was crouched low to the floor like a dog, but its face was far from anything friendly. Her back straightened as it moved closer to her, and started to make a sound. Almost like it was purring.

"Steve! Piper!" Lucas shouted from the top of the bus "Three o'clock. Three o'clock"

Steve turned his head and quickly saw what Lucas and Piper were trying to get his attention about. When Piper looked around them, she saw more. They were hunting, and ready to attack.

"Abort!" Dustin shouted from the doorway of the bus "Abort mission!"

"Steve!" Piper pulled on his hand and one lurched towards them, making Piper jump back. Piper has been afraid before. She felt it the night her parents never came home. But this was a different kind of fear. It was like she was staring death straight in the face.

The face of the demogorgon opened up and quickly the pack started to move towards them. Steve reached down and grabbed her hand, pulling her back towards the bus. She could feel them straight behind them. Piper felt her hand being pulled from Steve's as they neared the bus. She felt the sharp pain shoot up her leg and blood curdling scream leaving her lips. Steve turned quickly to see one of the

demogorgon's attacking Piper's leg.

"Piper!" He screamed, and he watched as she reached down and grabbed the tire iron in her hand, knocking the thing across its face and sending it flying across the lot. Steve moved quickly to wrap his arm around her.

He moved to push her into the bus first, nearly throwing her, before slamming the door tightly behind him.

"Fuck! Fuck!" Piper screamed as she reached towards her leg and felt the warm blood moving down her calf. "What the fuck was that!?" She screamed.

The loud sound of the demogorgon's hitting against the side of the bus overpowered the screams of all of them in the bus. But all seemed to stop when they heard a loud bang from the roof. Piper bit down on her lower lip to silence herself, wanting nothing more than to cry.

Everyone's attention went towards the opening of the bus, and Max was the first to look up and let out a scream as she came face to face with a demogorgon. Steve moved quickly to pull her behind him. But before anything could happen, a loud shriek was sounded, catching the demogorgon's attention. Everyone seemed to be frozen for a moment, before they quickly began to retreat.

"W-What's happening?" Piper spoke as everyone rushed towards the window to see them all running back into the woods.

"Did we scare them?" Lucas asked?

"No." Steve shook his head "They are running towards something. They are being called."

---

All five of them sat waiting inside the bus, not fully feeling safe enough to leave from the shelter they had created. Steve had pushed up Piper's pant leg to inspect the damage that was done by the demogorgon.

"It's not that bad. The bleeding has stopped. I think it's just a superficial wound." Steve spoke as he used some scrap material to

wrap around the three claw marks going down her calf and towards her ankle.

"Sure doesn't feel like it." She hissed slightly as he tightened the bandage. "Thank you."

"Don't worry about it." Steve looked up towards her. "You were pretty bad ass."

Piper smiled towards him and took his hand as he helped her stand from the bench she was sitting on. She hissed slightly as she put pressure on the leg, but felt the pain dull away the longer she stood.

"You gonna be able to walk on that?" He asked as she bent down to pull down her pant leg.

"Y-Yeah. I'll be fine." She smiled towards him, before turning towards the kids. "Alright we need to get out of here, in case they come back. We don't wanna be sitting ducks just waiting to be eaten."

"Where's the closest we can go?" Max asked

"Byers' place." Dustin spoke

"Alright. Let's go." Steve nodded his head.

"Our cabin is near the Byers'. My uncle keeps a shot gun and few other things in the house. If those things come back, we need more than just a bat and a tire iron to keep them away."

"Do you know how to use a gun?" Lucas asked with a slightly worried look on his face.

"My Uncle is Jim Hopper, what do you think?" Piper looked towards him, as if that were a stupid question.

"Right," Lucas nodded.

Quickly they all rushed off the bus and back down the trail they had originally come down. Piper towards the front of the pack, and Steve towards the back – in case any of the demogorgon's came back.

"You were pretty awesome back there," Max smiled up towards Piper as they walked. "You don't even know us and you're quick to defend us."

Piper shrugged "I just...have this feeling like I already know you guys."

She smiled down towards the girl and it was like it finally hit her. Eleven. She had been missing just as long as Hopper. They were both the reason for why she felt like she already knew these people. And now with the fear that was sitting in her stomach, the worry came back too. Piper had no choice but to pray that the two of them were together and safe.

When they arrived to the cabin, Piper worked quickly to walk towards the hall closet and grabbed her Uncle's gun, and grabbing the utility belt and bullets from inside the case. Steve stayed back on the front porch as the look out with Dustin and Lucas. Piper had sent Max towards the kitchen to find a few flashlights in case they would need those too.

"All set," Max called from behind her.

"Awesome" Piper loaded the gun, before placing it into the holster she'd attached to her belt. "Let's get out of here and pray that Joyce or my Uncle are at the Byers' house."

Max nodded her head and followed after Piper as they joined the rest of the gang, and quickly walked towards the Byers' house. Piper didn't lift her hand from the holster the entire walk, prepared to defend those she was already starting to feel like were her family.